

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

# Jamestown Bridge Demolition

Frequently Asked Questions



**Why is the Rhode Island Department of Transportation using explosives to take down the old Jamestown Bridge?**

Taking the bridge apart using controlled demolition takes less time and is a safer and more cost-effective means of demolition as compared with manual disassembly. The use of explosives in bridge demolition is a proven technology and has been used throughout the country.

### How many controlled demolitions will be needed?

There will be three major controlled demolitions and about a dozen smaller controlled demolitions. After the first blast in mid-April, subsequent major controlled demolitions will take place at approximately six-week intervals. Smaller controlled demolitions will take place between July and October. All demolitions are weather dependent.

### How will traffic be affected?

During the three major controlled demolitions, the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge (Route 138) will be closed for up to four hours and during the minor controlled demolitions, it will be closed for about 30 minutes. To avoid impacting commuting periods and weekend events, the closures will be restricted to 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays. Local roads in

Jamestown may be closed as well, and police and contractor employees will be in place to maintain a clear zone.

Motorists should avoid driving in these areas because their presence may adversely affect the demolition schedule. Emergency vehicles, such as

ambulances, will be permitted access just prior to and after the controlled demolition if needed.

### How will motorists be notified of road closures and detours?

RIDOT will use 40 fixed and portable electronic message boards; its Highway Advisory Radio system, 1630 AM; 511 Traveler Information and its website, [www.dot.state.ri.us](http://www.dot.state.ri.us), to announce road closures.

### Will the controlled demolition cause any damage to the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge?

Despite the proximity of the two bridges, no damage is expected. Controlled explosive demolition is often used on old bridges that are located as close, if not closer, to their replacements. The controlled demolition pro-

cedure calls for segments to fall straight down into Narragansett Bay. RIDOT will be inspecting the bridge to verify its integrity prior to its reopening.

### Will homes near the bridge need to be evacuated?

The number of homes affected is determined by the particular bridge segment being demolished and proximity to the shoreline. Affected homeowners will be contacted directly.

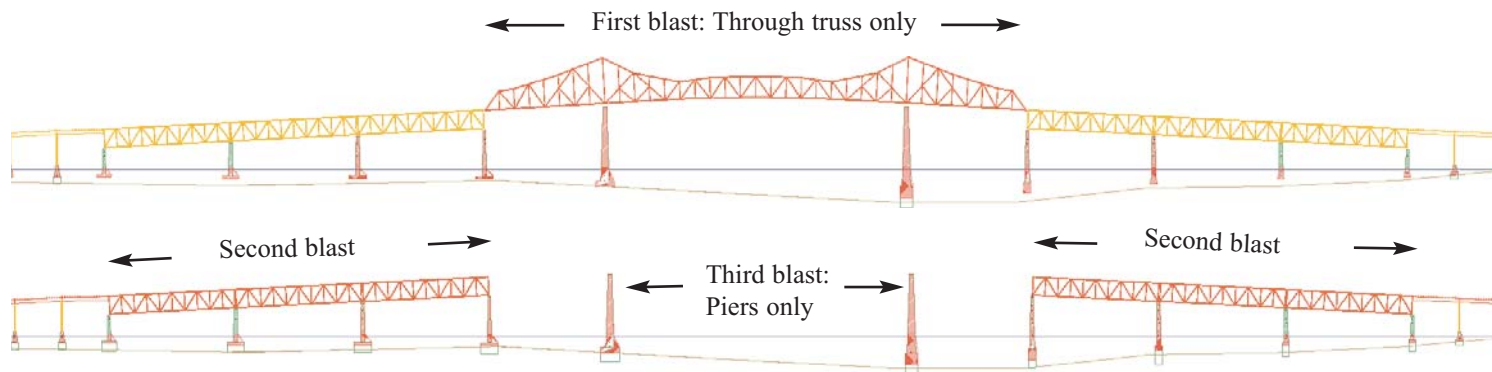
### Where will displaced homeowners go during the controlled demolition?

The Jamestown Philomenian Library will host displaced residents during the first evacuation period. Live video of the demolition will be broadcast in the library.

### Will the controlled demolition cause any damage to homes?

Due to the nature of the controlled demolitions, damage to homes from flying debris, air pressure changes or a ground vibration is unlikely. The sound and vibration produced will be similar to that experienced

## Old Jamestown Bridge demolition stages



*The above drawing shows the first two sections of bridge that will be removed. At top, the center span will be the first to go. At bottom, two large sections leading up to the center section will be removed at the same time during the second blast. The third blast will remove the two largest freestanding piers, which held up the center span.*

in a thunderstorm.

### **How does this controlled demolition work?**

The demolition uses controlled charges, and does not produce large fireballs or large amounts of flying debris as one might see in a Hollywood movie.

There are two types of charges. The first two blasts, which will remove the center through truss section and two adjoining deck truss sections, will use what are called linear shape charges. These devices resemble thin flexible lengths of copper pipe and are wrapped around key connecting points. The heat from the charges essentially burns through the steel, allowing the sections to separate and fall into the water.

Bridge segments will be fitted with a cable and buoy system to facilitate safe and efficient removal of the debris.

The two main piers and smaller piers will be removed by boring holes in the concrete and inserting conventional blasting charges. Because the charges are confined in the concrete, there should be only a limited amount of flying debris.

### **Will the falling debris cause damage to boats or docks?**

Very little wave action is expected when the debris hits the water, but RIDOT recommends that moored or docked boats within 3,000 feet of the old Jamestown Bridge be moved.

### **How will the controlled demolition affect marine traffic under the bridge?**

As bridge sections are demolished, it will take about four weeks to clear debris so that marine traffic can pass safely. The Coast Guard can provide more specific information but RIDOT recommends boaters avoid the area.

### **What will be done with the debris?**

All steel sections will be recycled. All concrete sections will be transported to three sites in Rhode Island Sound, where they will be positioned on the seabed to create artificial reefs.

### **Where can people go to observe the three major controlled demolitions?**

There are no nearby viewing areas, but the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, has a clear line of sight to the bridge. Due to space constraints, however, the number of spectators there will be limited.

Safety zones will be strictly enforced both in the air, on land and on the water.



This brochure was produced by the Communications Office of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

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### **For more information**

#### ***Motorists, Homeowners & Mariners:***

(401) 222-1362 ext. 4013

#### ***Media:***

(401) 222-1362 ext. 4007

#### ***Watch the demolition live:***

Cox Digital Cable Channel 124

[www.dot.state.ri.us](http://www.dot.state.ri.us)